



## What's going on this week?

Virgin Galactic, owned by Sir Richard Branson, are one of the first companies intending to make space travel accessible to the public. The company have seen a big increase in the demand for the tickets for flights to space, the first of which will be taking place later this year. The company, who completed its first test flight in 2018, said it had received almost 8,000 registrations of interest for future commercial flights!

### Main question:

**Do you think that space tourism is a good idea?**

### Listen, think, share

- Look at this week's poster and talk about what we know about space. Have we ever heard of space tourism?
- Read through the assembly resource, which provides information on space tourism and Virgin Galactic's first planned flight. Ask the children, if they were given the opportunity to go on the flight, would they want to? Talk about our reasons why.
- What do we think would be the benefits to space travel? Can we think of any negatives?
- Explain that the cost of each ticket is nearly £200,000 for a 90 min flight and that there is a waiting list for tickets. Does this amount surprise us? Why do we think some people are willing to pay so much for this experience?
- Little is known about the long-term effects on humans from travelling into space. Do you think more research and time should be invested into investigating who is suitable to leave the Earth's orbit? Currently, astronauts have to pass extensive suitability and health tests to make sure they are in good health before they go into space.
- Watch this week's useful video, which looks at one of Virgin Galactic's trial flights. From the clip, does the trip look like what we'd imagine it to? How is it similar or different?

### Reflection

Over history, the human desire to explore has been very powerful for many and led to huge advancements including, visiting all corners of the earth, air travel and even seeing people on the moon!



## KS1 Focus

### Question:

**What do we know about other planets?**

### Listen, think, share

- Write the word 'space' on the board. Can we think of a list of words or ideas associated with space e.g. planets, sun, moon, rocket?
- Have we heard of the solar system? Explain that our solar system includes the sun, which is a star, and all of the planets, comets and asteroids that go around it. Do you know the name of the planet that we live on?
- Look at resource 1, which gives more information about the planets in our solar system. Which is the smallest/largest planet? What questions do you have about the planets in our solar system?
- Have you ever heard of Pluto? Explain that Pluto comes after Neptune. At one point it was also classed as a planet but scientists have now said it is a dwarf planet.
- Write 'My Very Excellent Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas'. Explain that this can be used to help us remember the order of the planets from the sun. Can you create your own?
- How do you think we have information about the planets in our solar system? Telescopes, sending people into space and even sending unmanned machines to explore the deepest parts of our solar system.
- Would you like to explore our solar system? How would you like to explore it?

### Reflection

Our planet, Earth, is just one of the 8 planets in our solar system. We know lots about these planets as scientists have developed machines to explore them. There is still more to discover about space though!



## KS2 Focus

### Question:

**How many people have already travelled to space?**

### Listen, think, share

- What do we know about space? Can you name the planets in our solar system? What do you know about the sun? What do you know about Earth's moon? Discuss ideas and share responses.
- Explain that space often refers to everything in the Universe beyond planet Earth. How do you think we know about space? What we can see, the use of telescopes, sending space probes, sending people into space etc.
- Look at resource 2, which gives information about some of the people who have travelled to space. Does any of the information surprise you? What questions do you have?
- Focus on the number of people who have travelled to space since the first person in 1961. What do you think will happen to this number once commercial flights are introduced? Do you think it will increase at a more rapid rate or do you think the cost of the flights will cause it not to?
- Because people have travelled to space, do you think we know or understand all there is to know about space? Why/why not?
- Would you prefer to go to space as an astronaut working to discover and learn more, on a commercial flight to enjoy the experience or would you prefer not to go at all!

### Reflection

Whether travelling to space is something you might like to do or not, the introduction of commercial space travel will potentially increase the number of people who can travel to space.

## KS2 Follow-up Ideas

**Option 1:** Imagine you are strapped into the Virgin Galactic, ready to take your first trip into space.

- How do you feel?
- What can you see, hear, smell?
- What is your body doing?
- Can you describe the Virgin Galactic? What is it like inside? Is the seat comfy?

The Virgin Galactic is setting off.

- Describe what you can see, hear and feel.
- What are the other people on board doing?
- Which journey are you going on (orbital, suborbital or lunar)?

Describe the rest of your journey. You could do this as a diary entry!

**Option 2:** Read and research a famous astronaut from the past. Use the following to help:

- Who are they?
- Why are they famous?
- When did they first travel to space?
- What was the name of their ship?
- What did they do when they got to space?
- How long were they in space for?
- Have they made any other trips?

Use the information to create a factfile.

## KS1 Follow-up Ideas

**Option 1:** Choose one planet in our solar system. Use resource 1, books and the internet to find out the following information:

- What is it called?
- What is its position from the sun?
- How many moons does it have?
- Is it the smallest or largest planet?

Once the children have gathered their facts, they could organise them into a factfile and include a picture. Share their information with the class.

Challenge – which is your favourite planet and why?

**Option 2:** Planet maths!

Ask the children to work with a partner or as part of a small group to complete the following challenges:

- There are 8 planets, count to 8.
- Write the numbers 1 – 8.
- Write down one more and one less than 8.
- If you have 8 planets, how many more would you need to have 10?
- Mercury takes 88 days to orbit the sun. What is one more and one less than 88?
- Neptune has 14 moons and Uranus has 27 moons. How many more moons does Uranus have than Neptune?

## This Week's Useful Websites

[This week's news story](#)

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51639326](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51639326)



## This Week's Useful Videos

[Virgin Galactic in space](#)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmPGOHqhay8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmPGOHqhay8)



## This Week's Useful Vocabulary

**Accessible** – able to be reached or entered.

**Advancements** – helping something to develop, progress or improve.

**Commercial** – organisations or activities that are concerned with making money and profits.

**Demand** – require or need.

**Desire** – a strong wish to do or have something.

**Extensive** – covers a wide range of details, ideas or items.

**Tourism** – the business of providing services for people on holiday.